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African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/89 of 12 December 1997. The report updates the one submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-second session (A/52/327), focusing on the current situation of the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, including its status, operations, staffing, programme of activities and funding as well as proposals on how to strengthen its programmes and activities.

2. In 1997, the Institute received political support from the General Assembly, the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. All of those bodies expressed the view that the Institute could play an important role in promoting and coordinating regional technical cooperation activities related to crime prevention and criminal justice in Africa. However, the financial basis of the Institute has not improved since the last report of the Secretary-General on the subject was submitted to the Assembly. The lack of funding has not allowed the Institute to deliver satisfactorily its services to African States.

II. Programme activities

3. The Governing Board of the Institute, at its fifth ordinary meeting, held from 20 to 21 October 1997, considered the programme of work and budget of the Institute for the period 1998-1999 with a provision that the implementation of most of the specified activities would depend on the availability of funds. The programme consists of the following subprogrammes: (a) general direction and management; (b) training and human resource development; (c) comparative research and policy development; (d) information and documentation services; (e) advisory services to Governments and technical cooperation; (f) international cooperation and joint activities; and (g) conferences and seminars. Activities under each of the subprogrammes are discussed below.

A. General direction and management

4. The Institute has intensified its efforts to raise the awareness of African States regarding the necessity of strengthening cooperation among criminal justice administrations and police in different African countries with a view to countering the growing threat of crime, especially organized crime and other forms of transnational crime. The Institute has established working relations with international and regional agencies operating in African countries to promote good governance and sustainable development. It has continued to disseminate information to African States regarding innovative approaches to and good practices in crime prevention and criminal justice.

5. With regard to the resources available to the Institute, the Director has made several attempts to raise funds over and above assessed contributions, in close consultation with the Chairman of the Governing Board. The management of the Institute has ensured strict adherence to previously instituted measures regarding the operations and transactions of the Institute so that all activities could be implemented following the principles of transparency and accountability.

6. In accordance with the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of programme management in the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division (A/52/777, annex), concerted efforts will be made to build a more effective collaborative relationship between the Institute and the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat. This will include closer involvement of the Secretariat in the formulation of the programme of the Institute, in accordance with its statutes. In addition, the Secretariat will ensure that, in consultation with the Economic Commission for Africa, the priorities of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme will be adequately reflected in the work programme and direction of the Institute.

7. Core Professional staff posts continued to be frozen during the reporting period. That affected two posts at the P-4 level (one training officer and one research officer), one post at the P-3 level (information and documentation officer) and one post at the P-2 level (system analyst). It also affected three General Service posts. The Institute had the following staff to perform its functions: Director, Deputy Director, finance officer and seven General Service posts (two secretaries, one administrative assistant, one finance assistant, two messengers and one driver).

8. The salaries of the majority of the General Service staff were reduced by 40 per cent, the affected staff being retained on a part-time basis. The Governing Board, at its fifth ordinary meeting, decided that, as soon as resources permitted, the frozen Professional posts should be reactivated, the laid off Professional staff should be

reinstated and the General Service staff should be employed on a full-time basis to provide the Institute with the minimum capacity to function. In the meantime, the services of consultants would continue to be used to supplement existing expertise in implementing activities of the Institute.

B. Training and human resource development

9. The financial situation allowed the Institute to provide training only if it was funded by donor agencies or if sponsored by other institutions.

10. The Institute organized a workshop entitled "Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in Africa: Exchange of Interregional Experience and Implementation of International Principles", which was held at Kampala from 6 to 9 April 1998. The workshop, which was part of a project on extradition and mutual legal assistance in Africa, brought together officials from 37 African countries. The recommendations of the workshop were made available to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its seventh session. The workshop called for the development of a comprehensive convention on extradition and mutual legal assistance for Africa. Provided that funds will be made available to it, the Institute intends to convene a meeting of regional experts to develop a preliminary text to be used as a starting point for the drafting of such a convention, in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity.

11. In collaboration with the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy at Vancouver and the Prison Service of Uganda, the Institute organized a national seminar entitled "Alternatives to Incarceration: Their Applicability and Practice in Uganda", held at Kampala from 2 to 4 February 1998. The seminar focused on the use of non-custodial sanctions rather than incarceration as a principal response to crime. Funded by the Correctional Service of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, the seminar brought together 60 participants, including senior representatives of the various components of the Ugandan criminal justice system, legislators, legal experts and practitioners, criminologists and other concerned individuals. The final report of the seminar was published and widely distributed.

C. Comparative research and policy development

12. The report on the first phase of the African extradition and mutual legal assistance project of the Institute (A/52/327, para. 15) is available on the Internet home page of the Institute (http://www.unafri.unojust.org or http://www.unafri.org.ug). The database contains names and contact addresses of officials from different African countries who are handling extradition and mutual legal assistance matters. The report provided background information for the workshop on extradition and mutual legal assistance matters in Africa, held at Kampala in April 1998 (see paragraph 10 above).

13. A crime and victimization survey was launched in June 1998 as a joint research project to be carried out with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, which will be the coordinator of the project, and the University of South Africa. The project was to start in July 1997 (A/52/327, para. 16); however, the University of South Africa encountered difficulties in mobilizing the necessary funds on time. The project is scheduled to be completed in early 1999.

14. An action-oriented study on the resettlement of street children (A/52/327, para. 13) was expanded to include community youth crime prevention and community policing, with particular emphasis on street education and crime prevention. Some African States have shown an interest in undertaking similar research. The African Institute intends to publish the study on its home page.

15. A study on the social rehabilitation of prisoners (A/52/327, para. 14) was continued, with financial support from the Government of Uganda. The project could be extended to include correctional services of southern and eastern African countries, as some officials expressed interest in promoting the social rehabilitation of offenders in custodial institutions.

16. In line with the objectives of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, the African Institute designed proposals for action-oriented research projects on corruption and organized crime, on the prevention of transborder theft of and illicit trafficking in motor vehicles and on the computerization of criminal justice system statistics.

D. Information and documentation services

17. With the support of the National Institute of Justice of the United States Department of Justice, the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders has established its own Internet home page. The site, which is linked to the home page of the United Nations On-line Crime and Justice Clearing House (www.unojust.org), contains general information on the African Institute, some publications and a database on extradition and mutual legal assistance. With the support of the National Institute of Justice and the Rule of Law Foundation, new hardware and software were acquired early in 1998 to improve the accessibility of the home page of the African Institute. The National Institute of Justice sponsored the attendance of the information and documentation consultant of the African Institute at the fourth meeting of the World Criminal Justice Library Network, held at Washington, D.C., from 18 to 21 October 1997.

E. Advisory services to government and technical cooperation

18. Because of the financial situation of the African Institute, no advisory mission was undertaken during the reporting period.

F. International cooperation and joint activities

19. High priority was given to further improve the cooperation and coordination between the African Institute and the other institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network. The African Institute collaborated with other institutes regarding the following meetings during the reporting period:

(a) African regional workshop on firearm regulation for the purpose of crime prevention and public safety, held at Arusha from 3 to 7 November 1997, organized by the Centre for International Crime Prevention;

(b) International Conference on Community Service Orders in Africa, held at Kadoma, Zimbabwe, from 24 to 28 November 1997, organized by Penal Reform International, in cooperation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, the Centre for International Crime Prevention and the Government of Zimbabwe;

(c) Ad hoc meeting on national capacities for the collection of criminal justice information and statistics, held at Veldhoven, Netherlands, from 17 to 21 March 1998, organized by the Government of the Netherlands and the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

G. Conferences and seminars

20. The African Institute participated in numerous international, regional, subregional and national meetings and seminars, including the following:

(a) Conference on Arab international technical cooperation in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, organized by Naif Arab Academy for Security Sciences at Riyadh from 3 to 5 November 1997;

(b) Fourth meeting of the World Criminal Justice Library Network, held at Washington, D.C., from 18 to 21 October 1997, upon the invitation of the National Institute of Justice;

(c) Twelfth Coordination Meeting of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network held at Courmayeur, Italy, from 2 to 3 October 1997;

(d) Seminar on crime, violence and conflict towards early warning and social prevention mechanism, organized by the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council at Courmayeur, Italy, from 4 to 6 October 1997;

(e) Seventh session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held at Vienna from 21 to 30 April 1998.

21. Representatives of the African Institute participated in a number of locally held seminars and workshops relating to crime prevention and criminal justice, combating drug trafficking, illicit trafficking in motor vehicles, and violent crime and on the observance of human rights.

III. Funding and support

22. Total resources for 1998 amounted to $410,414.07. The funds were made available by (a) contributions from member States, (b) a grant from the United Nations, (c) grants in relation to specific projects and (d) income generated by the rental of the premises and facilities of the African Institute.

A. Assessed financial contributions of member States

23. Twenty-eight African States are members of the African Institute. The statutes of the Institute stipulate that its funding needs to be ensured by its member States. Since 1996, the payment of assessed contributions has decreased considerably. While in 1996, contributions of $63,024 were received, the Institute received only $20,935 in 1997. So far, the 1998 collections have been the lowest in the history of the Institute. By 31 July 1998, only two member States (Rwanda and Uganda) had made payments of assessed contributions for 1998, totalling $8,300. Since its establishment, assessed contributions have amounted to $317,468.47, thus leaving an outstanding balance of $1,965,047.53. Those contributions have been received from 13 States. Fifteen member States have never made any contribution to the budget of the Institute.

B. United Nations

24. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly approved a grant of $204,800 for the period 1998-1999 to cover the salaries of the Director and the Deputy Director of the Institute, as well as other administrative expenses.

C. Grants for funded projects

25. As at 31 December 1997, there was an unspent balance of $248,214.57 from a grant received from the United States Department of State and Department of Justice. The amount was earmarked for the completion of the project on extradition and mutual assistance in 1998. Similarly, the unspent balance of $13,977.50 from a grant from the National Institute of Justice was earmarked for finalizing the setting up of a home page on the Internet. The grant was also to be used to cover the costs for infrastructure and technical assistance required to link the Institute with the home page of the United Nations On-line Crime and Justice Clearing House on the Internet during 1998.

D. Other sources of income

26. The Institute continued to rent its unused premises to generate income to be used to partially offset administrative expenses. That activity generated income amounting to $32,000, in addition to interest on capital amounting to $5,522.

E. Additional resources required for the implementation of the proposed programme of work for the period 1998-1999

27. Necessary additional resources for the Institute for 1998 amount to $334,749. Those resources would be used as follows:

(a) Training workshops/seminars:

(i) Environmental crime, sanctioning strategies and sustainable development ($55,000);

(ii) Crime, political transition and effective strategies ($55,000);

(b) Research:

(i) Implementation of the next phase of the African survey on crime/victimization and criminal justice administration (two countries) ($55,750);

(ii) Action-oriented study on the resettlement of street children ($55,750);

(c) Establishment and operationalization of the library information and documentation centre, including production of reports and publishing of the journal of the Institute ($15,500);

(d) Reinstatement of core Professional staff ($87,749);

(e) Participation in meetings relating to crime prevention ($10,000).

IV. Governing Board

28. The fifth ordinary session of the Governing Board was convened from 20 to 21 October 1997. The Board reiterated that the Institute was important for promoting the rule of law in Africa. The Board considered the programme of work and the budget of the Institute for 1998. The report of auditors for the statutory audit of the 1994 and 1995 financial statements and the audit certificate of the auditors were approved.

V. Concluding remarks

29. In practically every country of the region, there are indications that the growing seriousness of criminality in all its manifestations has detrimental effects on public safety, peace and security, as well as the personal and material well-being of individuals. This is further aggravated by the spread of transnational crime. The high incidence of criminality, together with its level of sophistication in African countries, is posing serious threats to development strategies. There is an urgent need for crime prevention strategies for Africa, as well as better coordination among law enforcement agencies and the judiciary at the regional and subregional levels.

30. Therefore, there would appear to be every justification to provide the Institute with the necessary resources to assist member States in need of bringing up to date their criminal justice policies and strengthening their criminal justice systems. The importance of the Institute has been recognized time and again by the Governing Board, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the General Assembly.

31. Despite that need and the political support, the financial situation of the Institute has worsened to the extent that its limited activities have hardly had any impact on crime prevention strategies and criminal justice systems in Africa. While the host Government is still committed to supporting the Institute, its member States have shown decreasing interest in funding its programme. Never before in the history of the Institute have almost no contributions been received from member States in a given year. Thus, the viability of the Institute has basically depended on a United Nations grant and extrabudgetary contributions from the United States of America.